

Proposed Plan Amendment for Lincolnia:

"Obsolete office buildings in Lincolnia, which are especially disadvantaged due to the fact that they are outside the CBC, away from metro or transportation hubs, and have poor walkability, need and should be granted an FAR incentive to make their redevelopment economically feasible, provided that, during the rezoning process, any redevelopment filed under this the proposed Amendment is shown to decrease peak hour traffic generation, reduce parking needs and increase open space compared to that permitted by its existing zoning, and it is further demonstrated that any developmental impacts on schools, environment, parks, etc. can be reasonably mitigated."

Rationale: The County staff and the BOS has recognized the problem of increasingly vacant and obsolete office buildings and has passed a Countywide Amendment to promote the redevelopment of such office buildings. However, Lincolnia district is away from metro and most of it, lies outside the newly approved CBC and has poor walkability scores. Obsolete office buildings in this disadvantaged location are increasingly obsolete and vacant because they cannot attract tenants in competition to other amenity and retail rich walkable locations. For that same reason, any redevelopment in these disadvantaged locations can only command lower rents or sales price than at Tysons or Mosaic District. Therefore, for redevelopment to be economically feasible, an increase in FAR is appropriate to further the County's objectives in Lincolnia.

Explanation of the Proposed Plan Amendment:

- Address emerging community concerns or changes in circumstances of old office buildings that have become obsolete and cannot compete with newer buildings at Metro or walkable locations.
- Respond to other local jurisdictions, including Alexandria City, which are providing cash incentives for redeveloping obsolete office buildings.
- Advances major policy objectives including fostering revitalization of Lincolnia District outside the CBC, and ensuring better environmental compliance and/or increased open space during the subsequent rezoning process.
- The Amendment better implements the Concept for Future Development's policy direction which states that almost all employment growth should occur within designated Mixed-Use Centers and Industrial Areas. In Lincolnia District, there exist employment centers that are surrounded or adjacent to residential housing, creating inconsistency in zoning. The Amendment seeks to promote residential, or residential with home office growth, in Lincolnia that is outside the CBC, in order to promote more harmonious land uses in its neighborhood. Moreover, the Amendment recognizes that the enforcement of the County's bulk angle code restrictions can only be addressed on a site-specific basis during the rezoning process.
- The Amendment seeks to implement the County's recent Plan Amendment on redeveloping old office buildings by making it applicable to obsolete office buildings outside the CBC in Lincolnia..
- The Amendment responds to research by International Transportation Engineers (see 9th edition of their Manual) indicating that parking and peak hour traffic are greatly reduced in conversion of commercial uses to residential uses, thereby reducing the transportation constraints, especially during peak hours. Further, the conversion from office to residence will provide residents in Lincolnia with increased economies of scale for ride sharing and multi modal approaches that reduce trips.
- Obsolete office buildings in Lincolnia are obsolete because of their location away from CBCs and transportation hubs. As a result, they are unable to compete with better located office buildings. Without an FAR incentive, obsolete office buildings located outside the CBC in Lincolnia will be unable to justify the cost of redevelopment and conversion, and will be doomed to increasing vacancy, obsolescence and declining value. They may even eventually end up being boarded up, leading to crime, declining real estate values in the neighborhood, and declining tax revenues for the County. Their redevelopment as envisioned by the proposed Amendment will lead to increased real estate values and increased tax revenues for the County.